

# Bering Sea – Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crab Fisheries

Alaska Board of Fisheries

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Anchorage, Alaska

Oral report: RC 3 – Tab 4

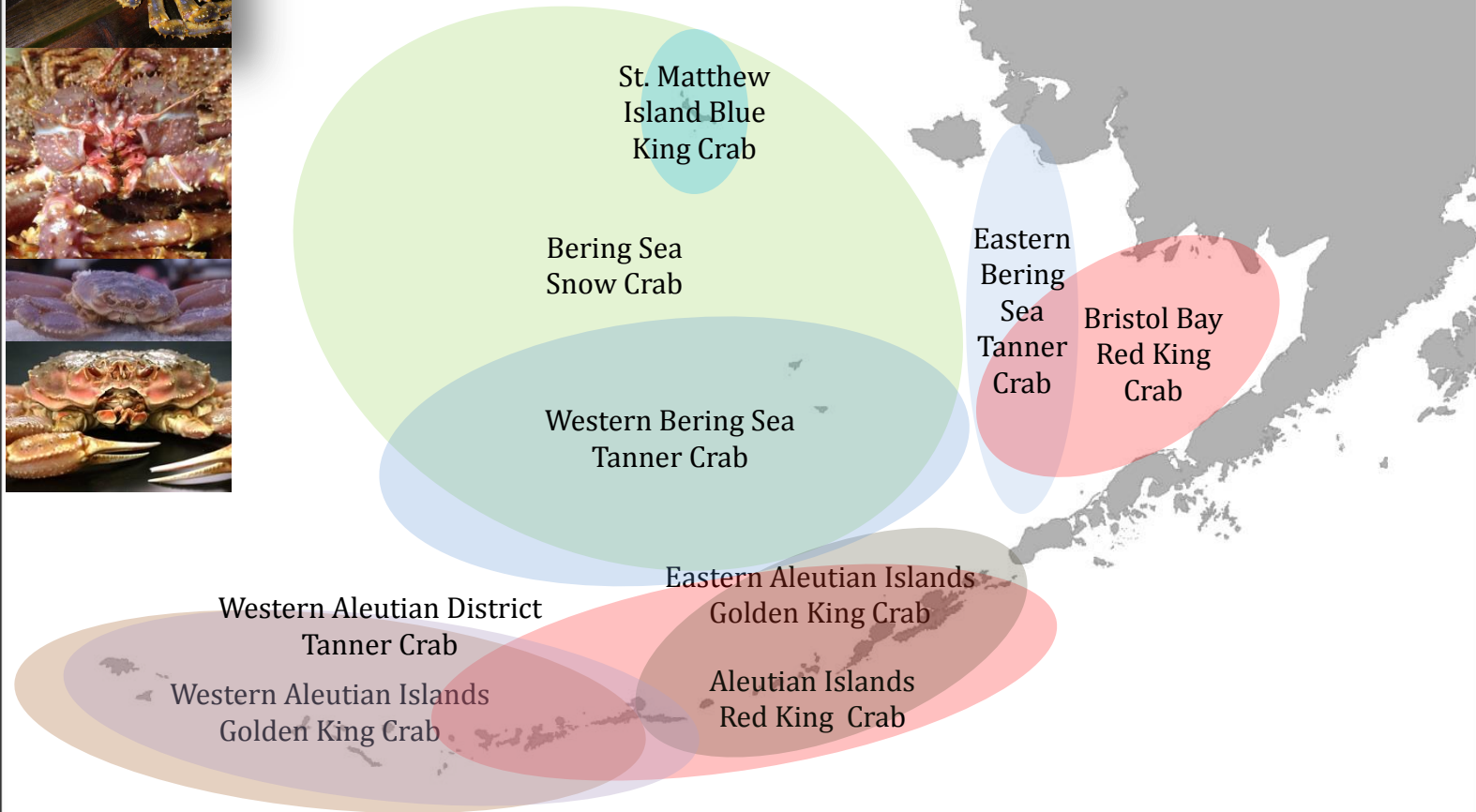
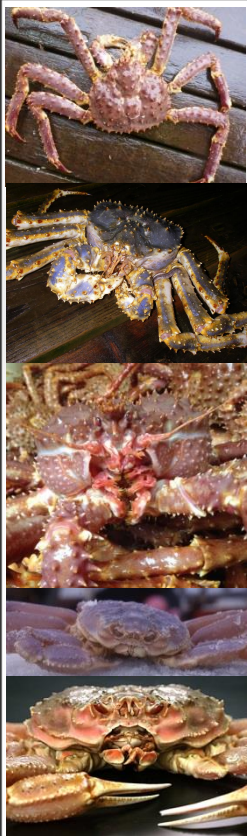
Written report: RC 3 – Tab 1

Staff comments: RC 2





# Bering Sea – Aleutian Islands Crab Fisheries



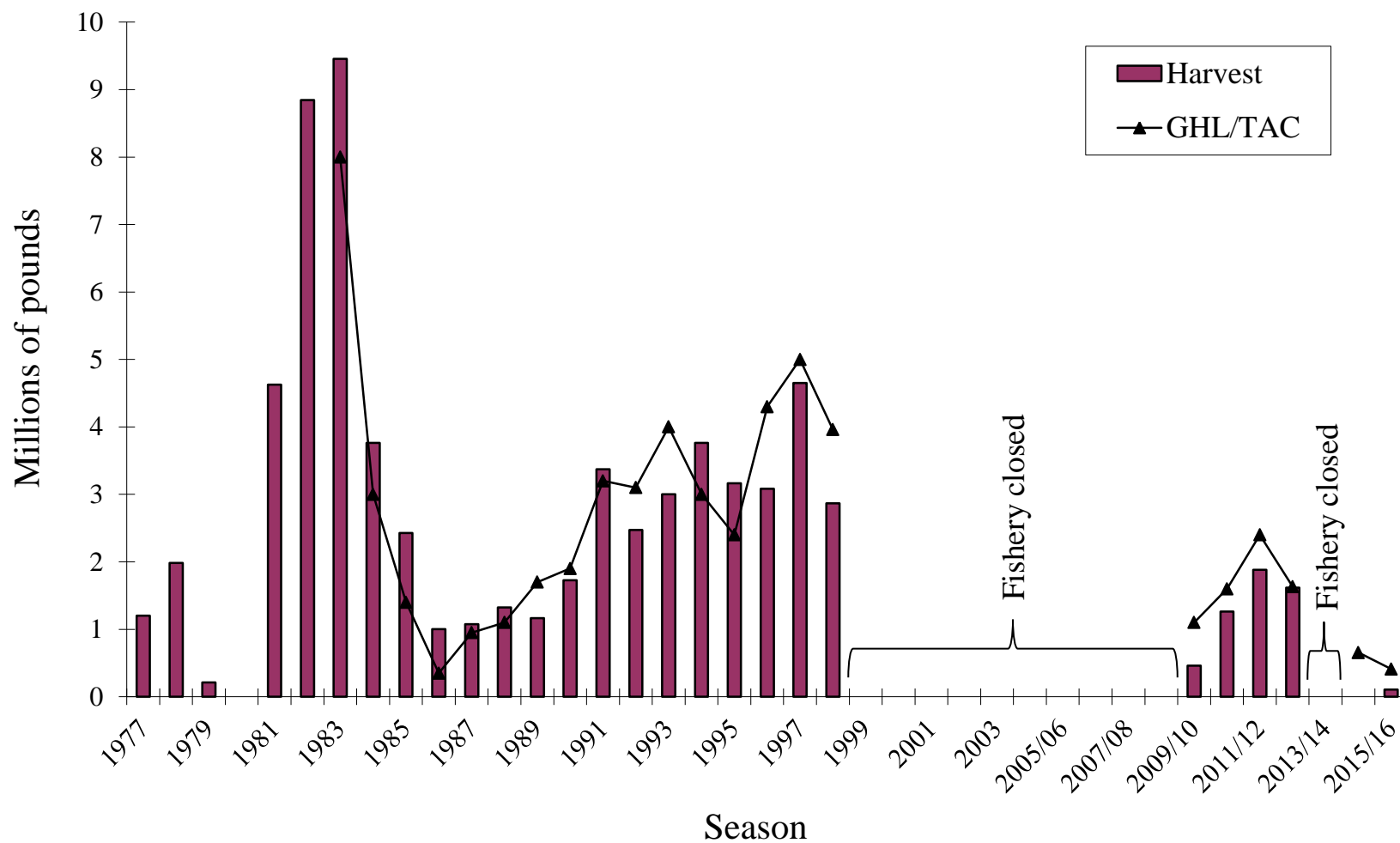
# Bering Sea King Crab Fisheries

St. Matthew  
Island Blue  
King Crab





# St. Matthew Island blue king crab







# St. Matthew Island blue king crab



## **Proposal 242**

Correct error in harvest strategy

- 10% mature male abundance

Replace estimates of male abundance

- 3.217 million pounds
- 1978 – 2012 average survey estimate

## **Proposal 259**

- Specify escape ring placement on vertical side

# Bering Sea King Crab Fisheries

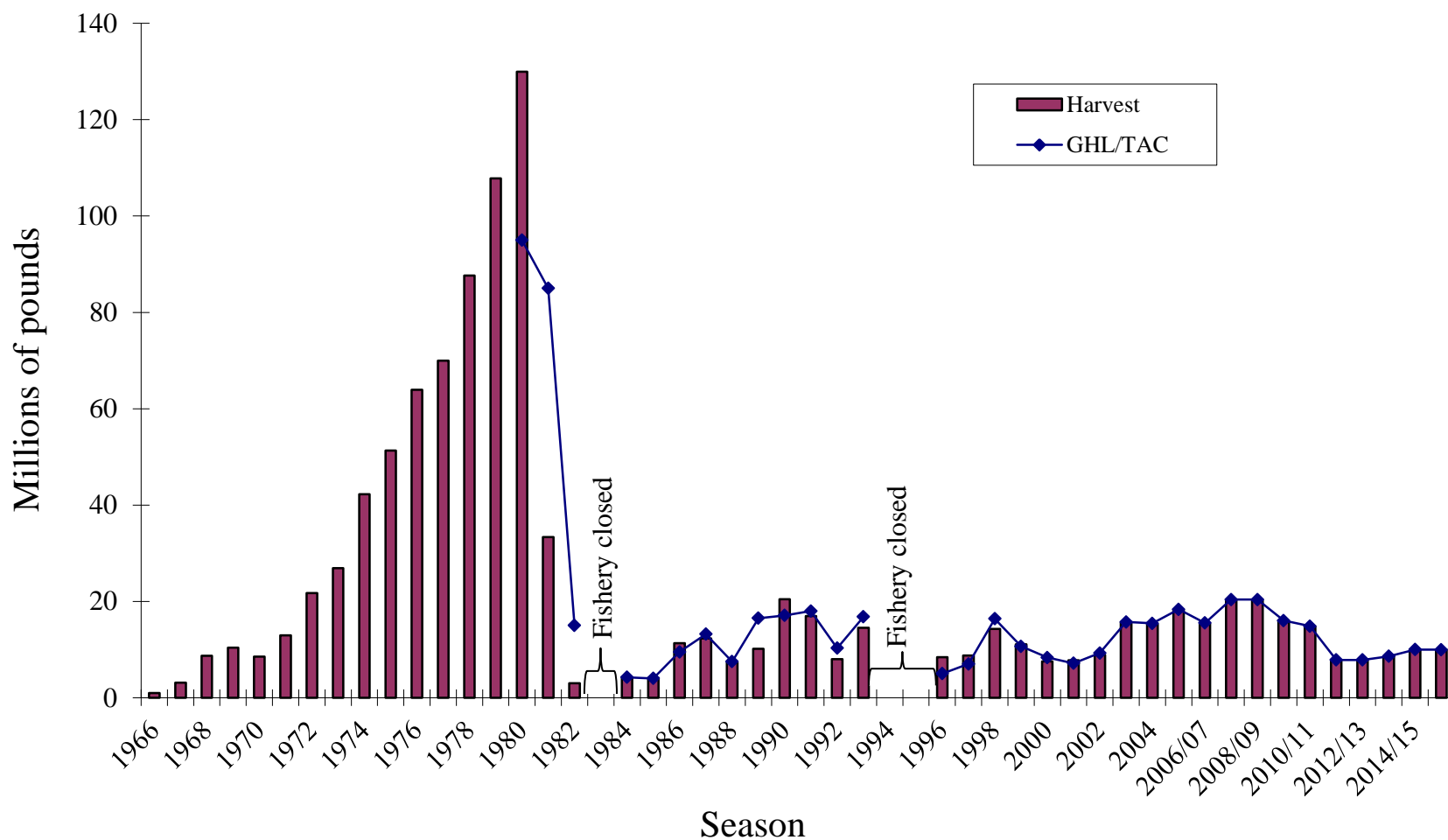


Bristol Bay  
Red King  
Crab





# Bristol Bay red king crab



# Incidental Retention

## **Proposal 256**

Full retention of incidental Eastern Bering Sea Tanner crab in Bristol Bay red king crab fishery

## **Current Regulations**

Retain incidental Eastern Bering Sea Tanner crab up to 5% of the weight of Bristol Bay red king crab

Cannot retain incidental Bristol Bay red king crab in Eastern Bering Sea Tanner crab fishery

Vessel must have IFQ/CDQ for both fisheries



# Incidental Retention



- Different species
- Different stock assessments
- Different season dates
- Different fishery boundaries
- Different gear configurations

# Aleutian Islands King Crab Fisheries



Eastern Aleutian Islands  
Golden King Crab

Western Aleutian Islands  
Golden King Crab

Aleutian Islands  
Red King Crab



# Aleutian Islands King Crab

## **Proposal 264**

Repeal provisions allowing concurrent harvest of Aleutian Islands red and golden king crabs

## **Current Regulations**

### Classification

- Vessels cannot simultaneously retain IFQ/CDQ crab and non-IFQ/non-CDQ crab

### Gear Requirements

- Golden king crab can only be taken with longlined pots
- Red king crab may only be taken with single pots



# Aleutian Islands King Crab

## **Proposal 263**

Better target 50% observer coverage rates in the Aleutian Islands golden king crab fisheries

Department is working with industry to more accurately achieve current target coverage rates without regulatory changes





# Aleutian Islands Tanner Crab Fishery

## **Proposal 262**

Develop more detailed regulations for Western Aleutian District Tanner crab fishery

## **Current Regulations**

Commissioner's Permit authority



# Bering Sea Snow and Tanner Crab Fisheries



Bering Sea  
Snow Crab

Western Bering Sea  
Tanner Crab

Eastern  
Bering  
Sea  
Tanner  
Crab







# Bering Sea Tanner Crab



One stock – two fisheries  
divided at 166° W long

## Eastern Bering Sea Tanner

Between 163° W and 166° W long

Legal size 4.8 in

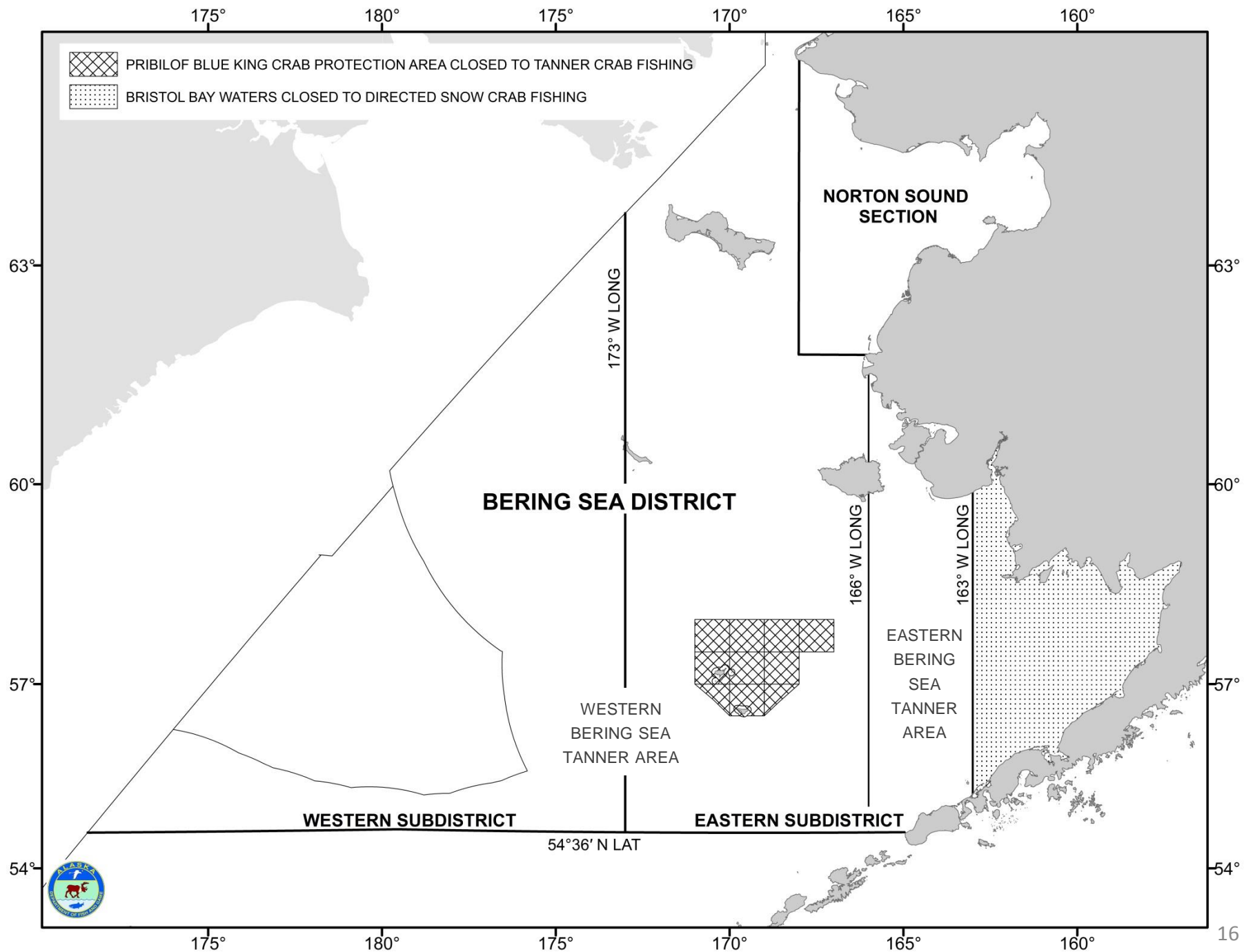
Industry preferred size 5 in

## Western Bering Sea Tanner

West of 166° W long

Legal size 4.4 in

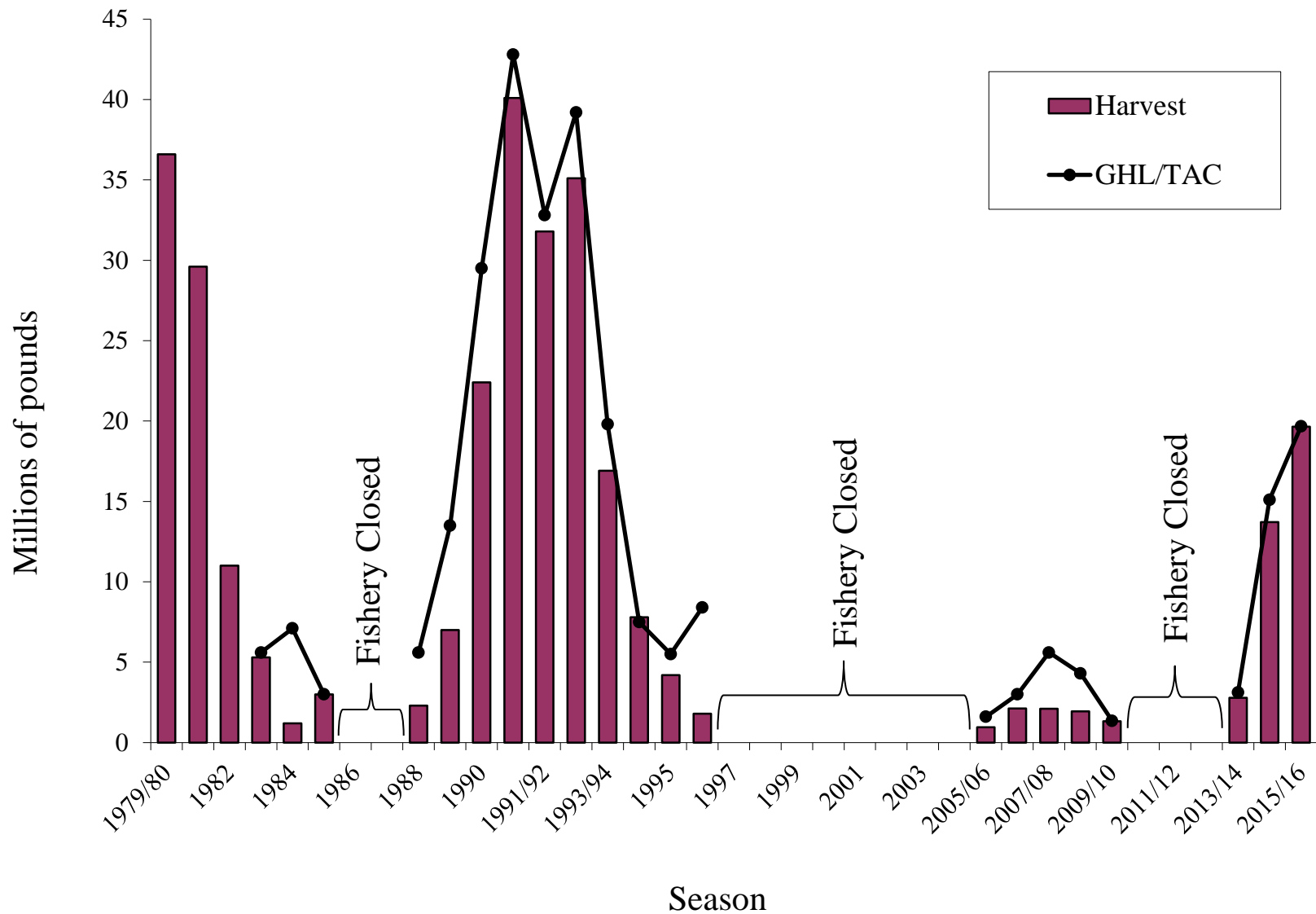
Industry preferred size 5 in







# Bering Sea Tanner Crab





# Bering Sea Snow Crab

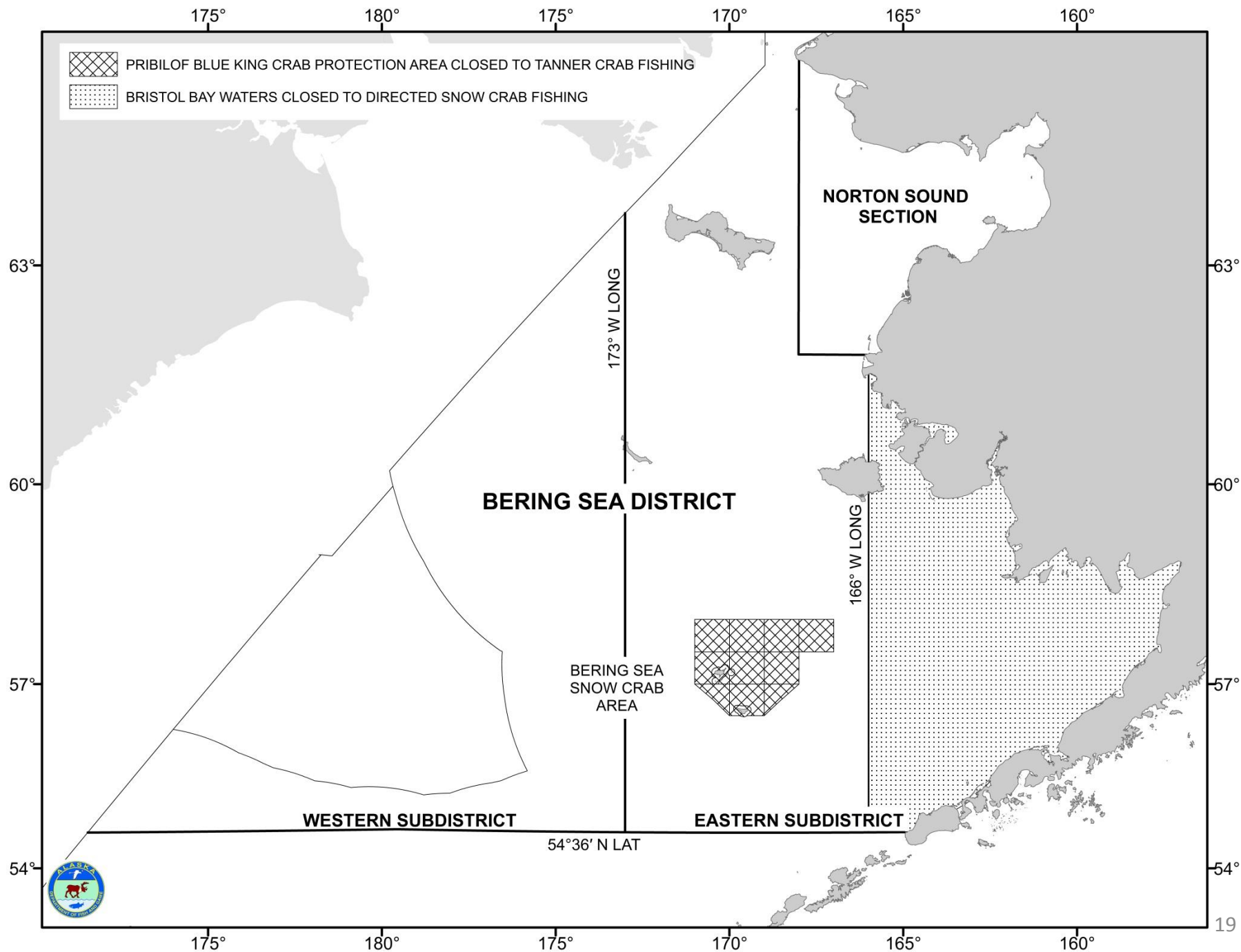


One stock – one fishery

- West of 166° W long
- Legal size 3.1 in
- Industry preferred size 4 in

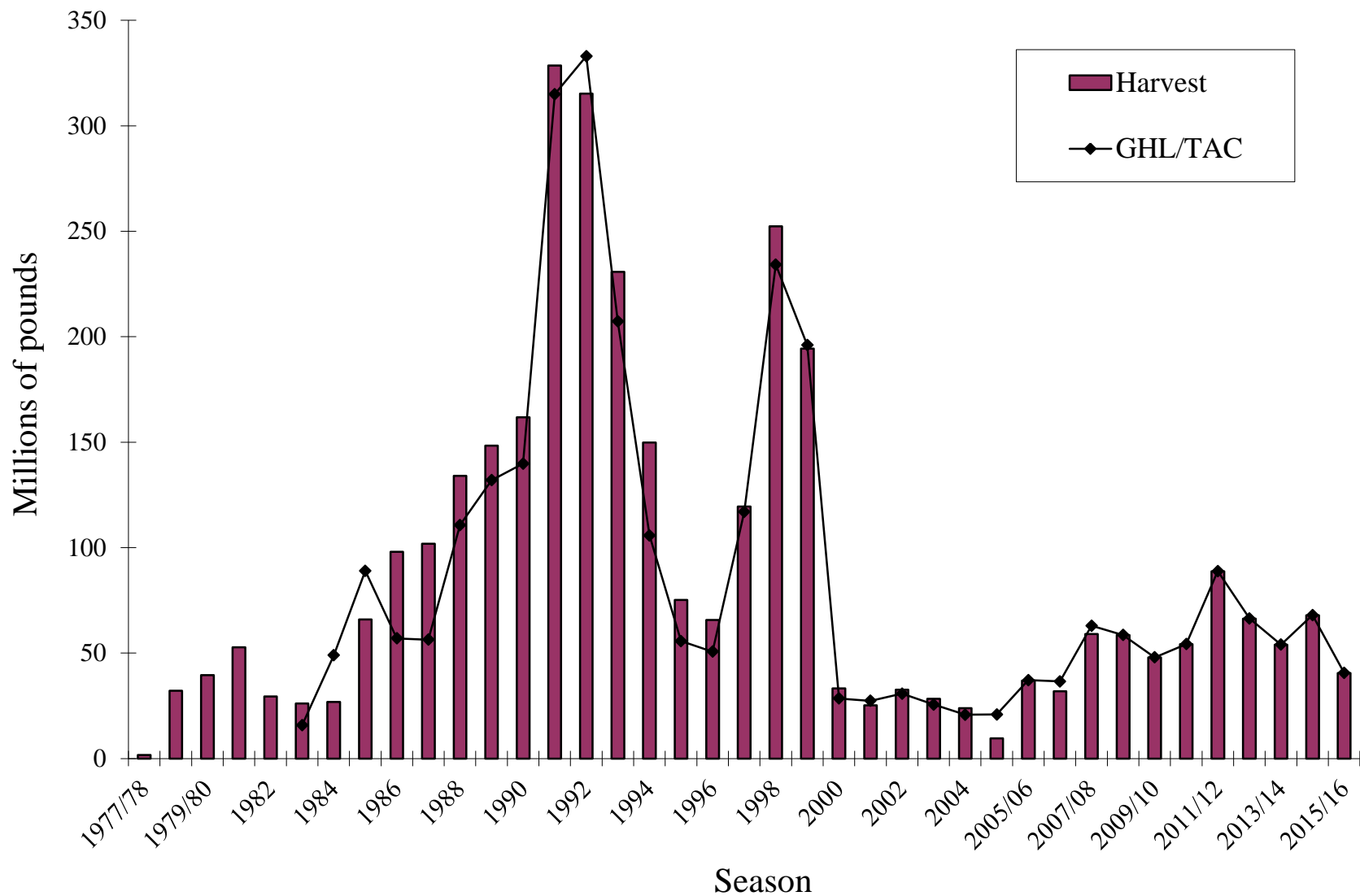








# Bering Sea Snow Crab





# Proposals

- Season Date Extension (Proposal 251)
- Fishery Boundaries (Proposals 257 and 258)
- Chionoecetes Identification (Proposal 260)
- Incidental Retention (Proposals 250, 254, 255, 256, and 261)
- Transitioning between Fisheries (Proposals 252 and 253)





# Season Date Extension



## Proposal 251

- Western Bering Sea Tanner only
- March 31 → April 15

## Current Regulation

Male Tanner crab in the Bering Sea District may be taken from noon October 15 through 11:59 p.m. March 31

Tanner has closed on or before March 31 since mid-90s



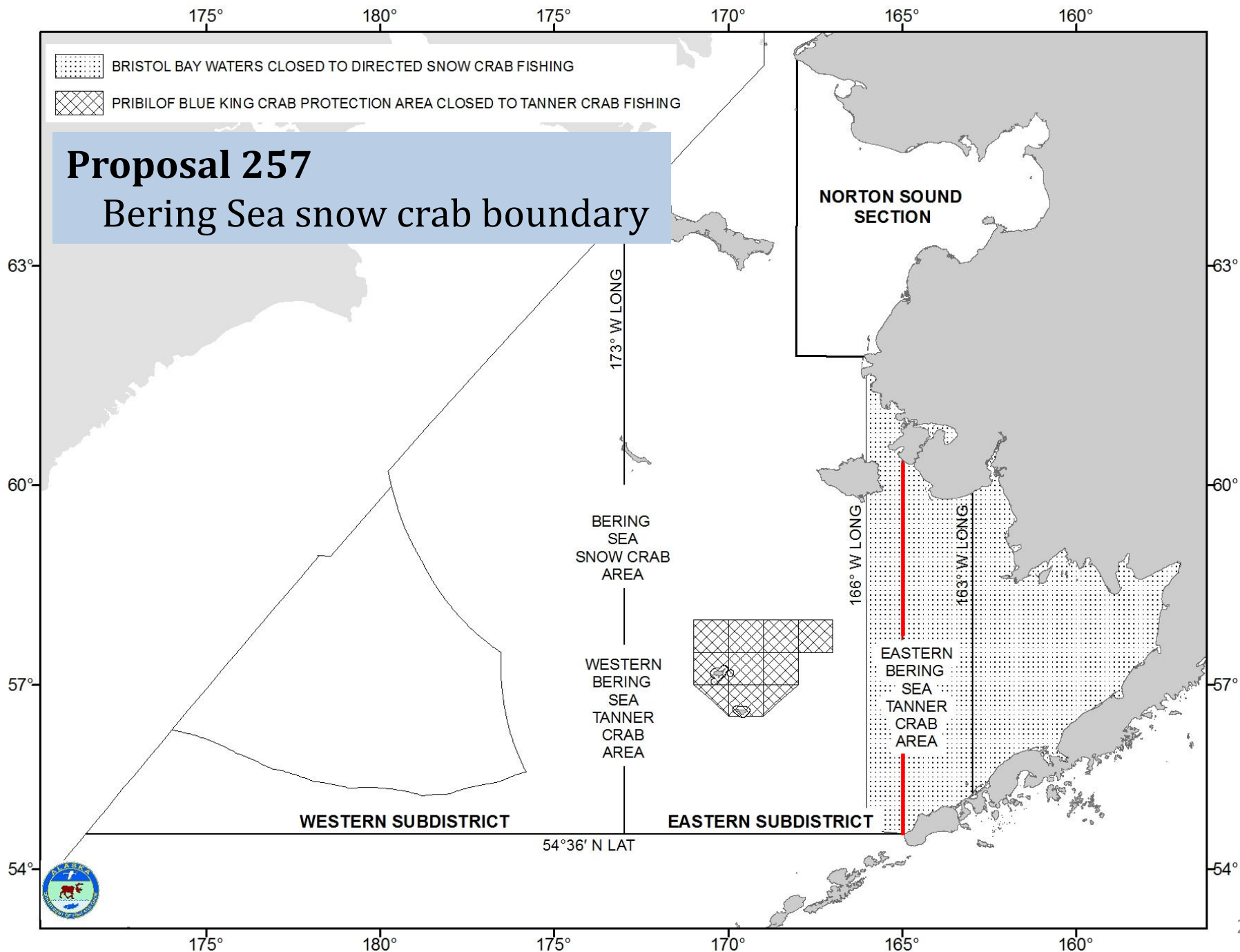
# Fishery Boundaries

## **Proposal 257**

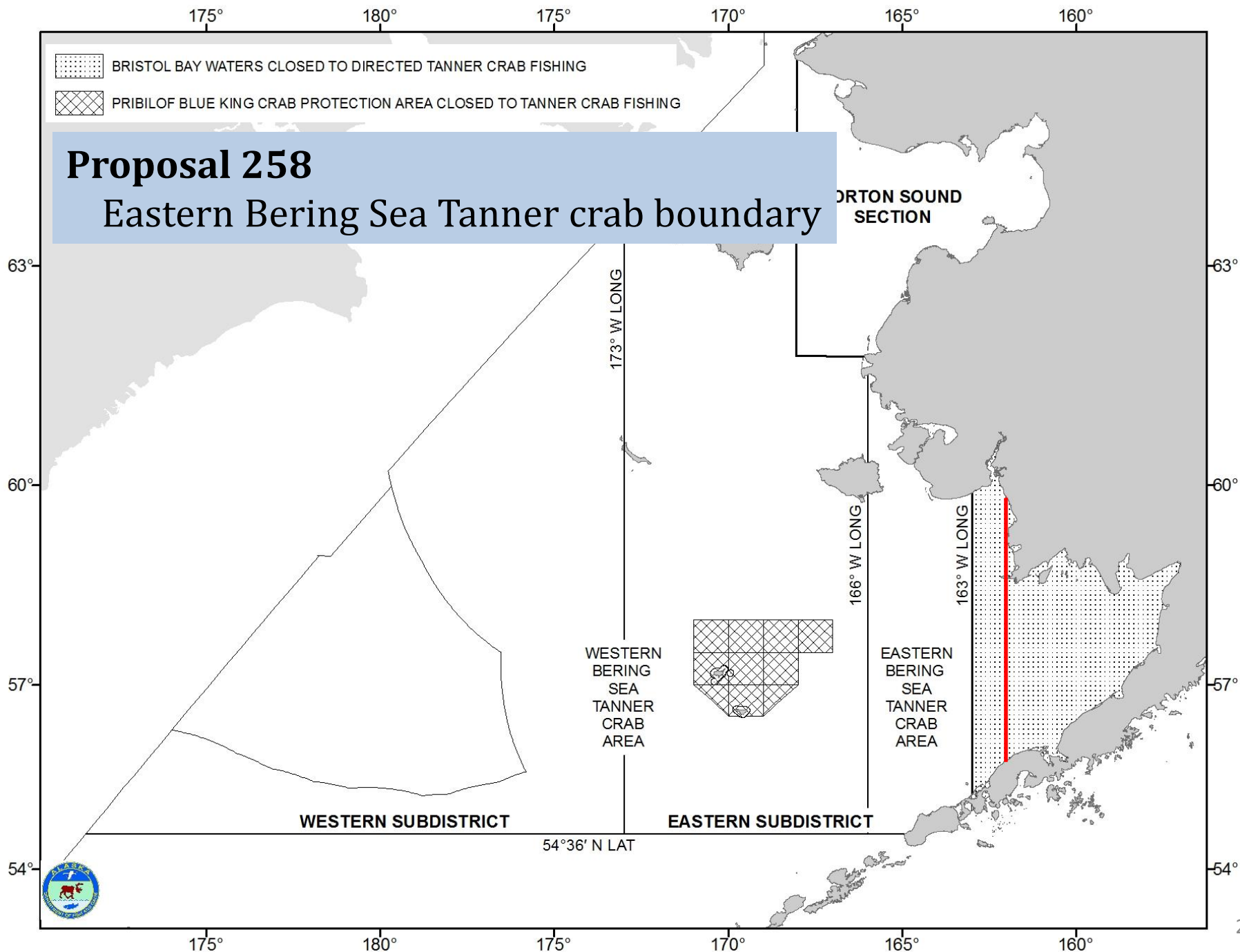
Move eastern boundary for Bering Sea snow crab from 166° W long to 165° W long

## **Proposal 258**

Move eastern boundary for Eastern Bering Sea Tanner crab from 163° W long to 162° W long







# Chionoecetes Identification



Snow Crab

Hybrid

Tanner Crab



# Snow/Tanner Identification

Eye  
Color

Epistomal  
Margin





# Snow and Tanner Crab



## **Chionoecetes opilio (snow)**

Average weight: 1.4 lb

Distribution: northerly

Legal size: 3.1 in

Industry preferred size: 4 in



## **Chionoecetes bairdi (Tanner)**

Average weight: 1.9 (EBT)/1.7 (WBT) lb

Distribution: southerly

Legal size: 4.8 (EBT)/4.4 (WBT) in

Industry preferred size: 5 in



# Snow/Tanner Identification



Regulations only define Tanner crab



2 blood red eyes

**AND**

'm'-shaped esophageal margin

= Tanner crab

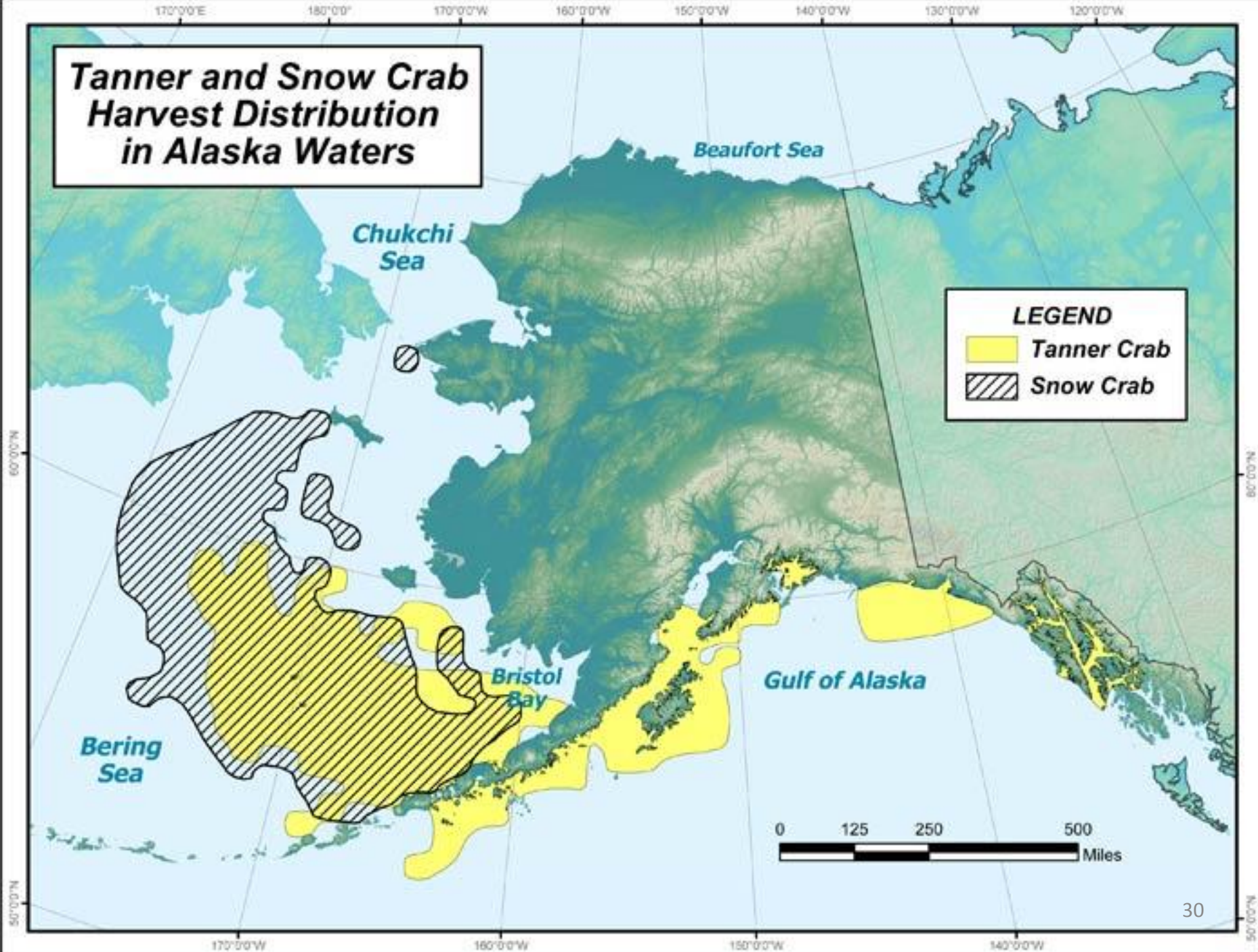


All other Chionoecetes crab  
(including most hybrids)

= snow crab



# ***Tanner and Snow Crab Harvest Distribution in Alaska Waters***





# Hybrid Chionoecetes

- Result of *C. bairdi* and *C. opilio* mating
- Biologically viable
- Range of characteristics
- Legal determination
- Enforcement issues

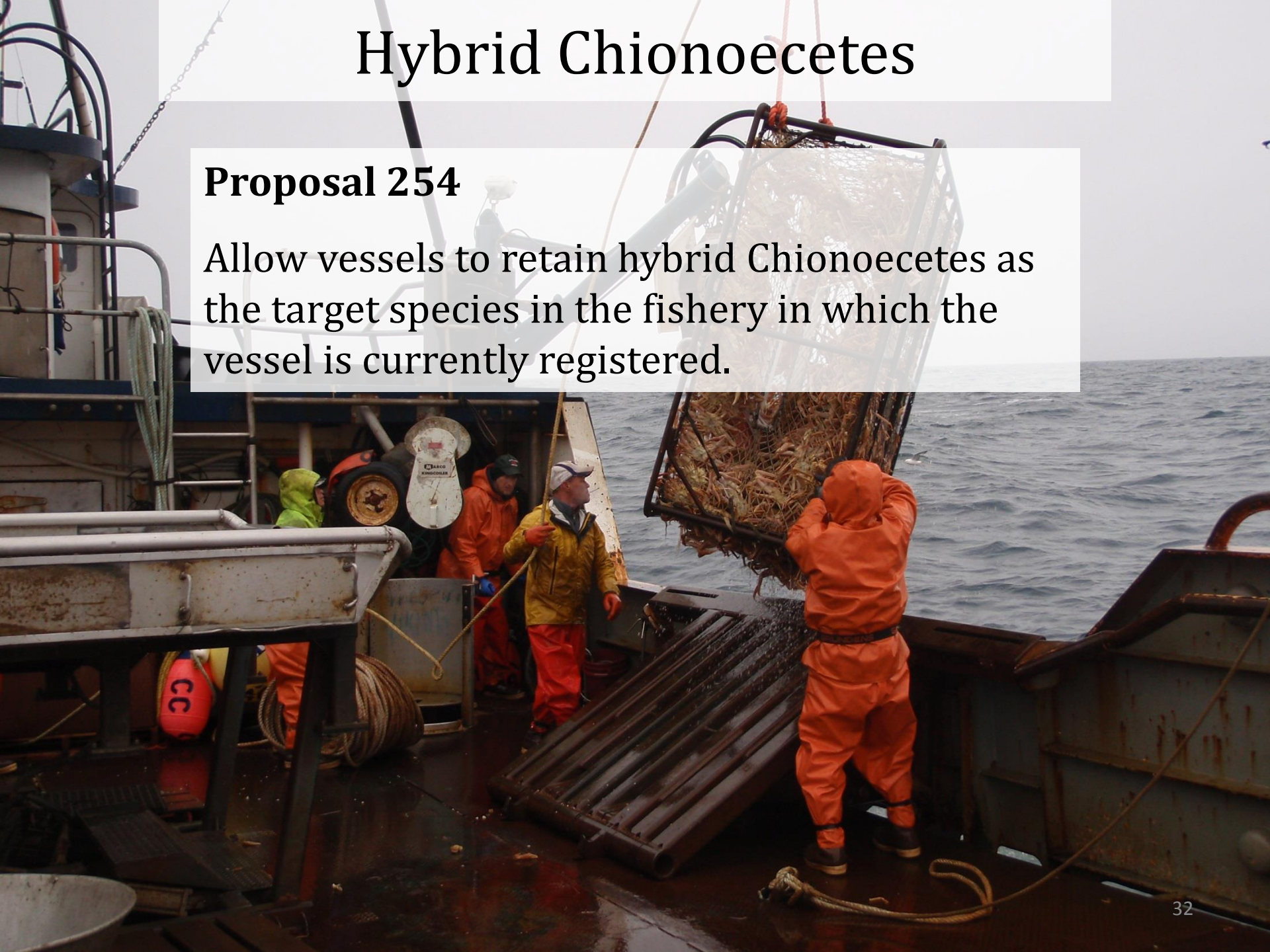




# Hybrid Chionoecetes

## Proposal 254

Allow vessels to retain hybrid Chionoecetes as the target species in the fishery in which the vessel is currently registered.






# Chionoecetes Identification

## Proposal 260


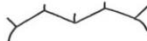



Adopt quick reference guide by reference



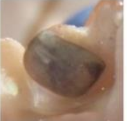



### Chionoecetes Crab Quick Reference Guide

The legal definitions of Tanner (*C. bairdi*) and snow (*C. opilio*) crab are in regulation 5 AAC 35.521.

A *Chionoecetes* crab with both eyes completely red in color AND with the margin of the upper mouth (also referred to as the upper teeth or epistomal margin) notched at two points with angular V-shaped cuts forming an "M" shape is, by legal definition, a Tanner crab; all others are legally snow crab.

| TANNER CRAB - <i>C. bairdi</i>   |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Upper Mouth or Epistomal Margin</b>   | <b>Eye Color</b>   |
|  <u>AND</u>  |    |
| These are M-shaped.  | These eyes are completely red.   |

| SNOW CRAB - <i>C. opilio</i>   |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Upper Mouth or Epistomal Margin</b>   | <b>Eye Color</b>  |
|  |    |
| These are NOT M-shaped.  | These eyes are NOT completely red.  |

This guide is not intended to provide definitive biological identification, but instead allow for consistent application of the regulations.

(Rev. 09/2016)



# Incidental Retention

## **Proposals 250, 255, and 261**

- 256 Full retention of incidental Eastern Bering Sea Tanner in Bristol Bay red king crab
- 250 Full retention of incidental Bering Sea snow crab in Western Bering Sea Tanner crab
- 255 Retention of incidental snow crab in Eastern Bering  
& 261 Sea Tanner

## **Current Regulations**

- 250 Retain incidental Bering Sea snow crab up to 5% of the weight of Western Bering Sea Tanner crab
- 255 Retention of snow crab in Eastern Bering Sea  
& 261 Tanner crab prohibited

Vessels must have IFQ/CDQ for both fisheries





# Incidental Retention

- Different species
- Different stock assessments
- Different season dates
- Different fishery boundaries
- Different gear configurations



# Transitioning Between Fisheries

## Proposals 252 & 253

Allow vessels to rig, bait, and set gear for a new fishery before fully exiting the current fishery

252 Observed vessels

253 Unobserved vessels





# Transitioning Between Fisheries

## Current regulations

- Can only have gear deployed in one fishery at a time
- Must deliver all crab before registering for the next fishery
- Cannot have gear rigged, baited, and set before registering for a fishery
- Cannot have gear deployed in multiple fisheries simultaneously





